

THE DAILY UPSC BRIEF

HIGH-YIELD DAILY SOURCES & ANALYSIS | 12 OCTOBER 2026

TODAY'S COVERAGE Table of Contents

9 ARTICLES 4 GS PAPERS 9 MCQS & MAINS Qs

GS Paper 1: Society & History — Page 1

1. The Caste Thread Travels Overseas: Dalit Students Abroad 1

GS Paper 2: Polity, Governance & IR — Page 2

2. RTI at 21: The Gaps in Proactive Disclosure 2
3. Make the Data Protection Board Functional: Kerala HC 4
4. Mizoram to Count Refugees Separately in Census 2027 5
5. Katchatheevu: What the 1974 and 1976 Agreements Settled 6

GS Paper 3: Security, Environment & S&T — Page 8

6. Why the UAPA Needs Reform 8
7. Global Warming, Sex Reversal and Frog Extinction Risk 9
8. TRISHNA: Indo-French Thermal Imaging Satellite 11

GS Paper 4: Ethics — Page 12

9. No 'Slow Learners': Attitude and Expectations 12

PRELIMS POINTERS — TODAY IN ONE LINE EACH

- Pranavi Urs** — first Indian woman golfer to win an individual Asian Games gold (Aichi-Nagoya 2026); after Lakshman Singh (1982) and Shiv Kapur (2002).
- Udhayveer Sidhu** — won the men's 10m air pistol gold at the ISSF World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) in Cairo, Egypt.
- International Day of the Girl** — observed on 11 October; Smriti Mandhana was named UNICEF India's celebrity advocate on the day.
- Jonathan** — an Aldabra giant tortoise on Saint Helena (South Atlantic), the world's oldest-known living land animal at about 194 years.
- Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906)** — painter commissioned by the Gaekwad of Baroda in 1888; his works are housed at the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, Vadodara.

HOW TO READ THIS BRIEF

☐ Why in News ☐ Target Prelims MCQ ☒ How to Use in UPSC Mains ☐ Mains Practice / Case Study Question

GS PAPER 1: SOCIETY & HISTORY

The Caste Thread Travels Overseas: Dalit Students and Discrimination Abroad

Why in news: Dalit students at universities such as Oxford, SOAS and Stanford report that the dominant-caste Indian diaspora has carried caste prejudice into classrooms and social life abroad.

Story so far: The 9 Oct Brief covered a 'purification' ritual in Dehradun and the limits of Article 17. New today: how caste follows Indians abroad.

Key Details:

- **Covert markers:** Students describe peers 'decoding' caste through surnames, diet, accent, the tone of one's language — even a pat on the back to feel for a sacred thread.
- **Isolation:** Feeling unwelcome in mainstream Indian student groups, Dalit scholars form their own circles, such as the Oxford South Asia Ambedkar Forum and SOAS's Dr. Ambedkar Society.
- **Unequal start:** Many rely on scholarships, live frugally and send money home, while dominant-caste peers often arrive as second- or third-generation students abroad.
- **Legal recognition:** Students want caste listed as a protected category in foreign anti-discrimination laws; critics within the diaspora say focus should shift away from caste.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Policy firsts:** Seattle became the first U.S. city to ban caste discrimination in February 2023; California's state-wide Bill (SB 403) was vetoed in October 2023.
- **At home:** Deaths such as Rohith Vemula's (2016) keep campus caste discrimination in public debate in India.

Caste: Key Sociological Concepts

- **Sanskritisation:** M.N. Srinivas's term for lower castes adopting the customs and rituals of higher castes to rise in the hierarchy.
- **Dominant caste:** Also Srinivas's idea: a caste with numbers, land and political power dominates a village, whatever its ritual rank.
- **Endogamy:** Ambedkar's 'Castes in India' (1916) argued that marriage within the group is the essence of caste.
- **Annihilation of Caste:** Ambedkar's undelivered 1936 speech, calling for an end to caste rooted in scriptural sanction.
- **In the Constitution:** Article 15 bars caste discrimination, including in shops, restaurants and public places (Article 15(2)); Article 17 abolishes untouchability.
- **Not to confuse:** Sanskritisation (copying higher castes) differs from Westernisation (adopting Western ways).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS1 (caste, diaspora, globalisation) to show that caste adapts to new settings rather than disappearing with migration, education or urbanisation.

Mains value-add: Ambedkar warned in 'Castes in India' (1916) that if Hindus migrated to other regions of the earth, Indian caste would become a world problem — cite it on caste in the diaspora.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to caste in Indian society and law, consider the following statements:

1. B.R. Ambedkar's paper 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development' identified endogamy as the essence of caste.
2. The concept of Sanskritisation was put forward by M.N. Srinivas.
3. Article 15 of the Constitution prohibits caste discrimination only by the State and not in access to shops or public restaurants.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Ambedkar's 1916 Columbia paper called endogamy the essence of caste (Statement 1 true). Srinivas coined Sanskritisation (Statement 2 true). Article 15(2) expressly covers access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of entertainment, so it binds more than the State — the trap (Statement 3 false).

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2018 (GS1): "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment. (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SOAS: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London | U.S.: United States

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 1

Durga's hair, woven by Muslim artisans: in Parbatipur village of Howrah's Amta block, Muslim families have for generations made jute wigs for Durga idols, supplying Kumartuli and buyers in Bihar, U.P., Nepal and Bangladesh; jute prices have risen from about ₹90 to ₹140–150 a unit in two to three years.

How to use: *GS1 (Indian culture, syncretism): example of shared cultural economies across communities.*

Manipur's merger: seven banned armed groups called a shutdown on October 15 to mark the 1949 merger of Manipur with India as a 'National Black Day'. Maharaja Bodhchandra signed the Manipur Merger Agreement in Shillong on 21 September 1949; it took effect on 15 October 1949.

How to use: *GS1 (post-independence consolidation): cite with Tripura's merger (also 15 October 1949) when discussing the integration of princely States in the Northeast.*

GS PAPER 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE & IR**RTI at 21: The Gaps in Proactive Disclosure Under Section 4**

Why in news: As the RTI Act turns 21, an analysis of Central Information Commission data shows that most public authorities still fall short of the suo motu disclosure the law requires.

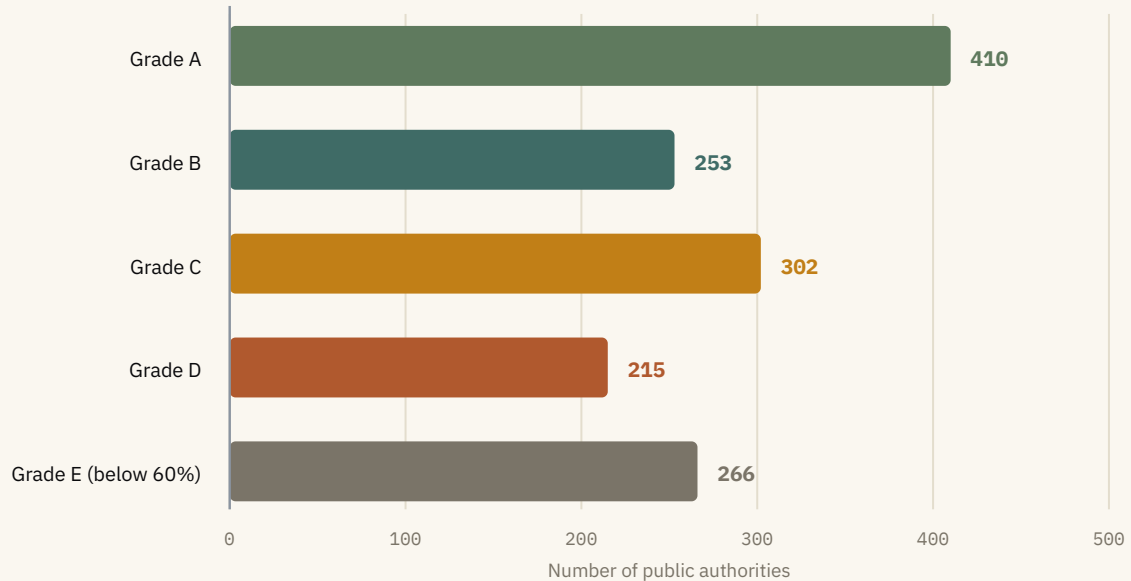
Story so far: The 29 Sept Brief covered a Tamil Nadu order exempting a department from the RTI Act. New today: weak voluntary disclosure across Central departments.

Key Details:

- **The duty:** Section 4(1)(b) lists 16 types of information — from officials' contact details to budgets — that public authorities must publish on their own.
- **Audit gap:** Of 2,303 public authorities registered with the CIC, 1,446 (about 63%) submitted transparency audit reports for 2024-25; more than half of these scored Grade C or below.
- **Websites:** Of 94 departments listed on the RTI portal, only 33 displayed the audit reports; 56 complied with Section 4 on most categories.
- **Pendency:** About 23 lakh RTI requests were handled in 2024-25, of which about 5.1 lakh (22%) were pending from the previous year.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Trend:** Audit submissions doubled from 754 in 2020-21, though nearly 37% of authorities still did not submit one.
- **SC's direction:** In *Kishan Chand Jain* (2023), the SC directed the CIC and SICs to continuously monitor compliance with Section 4.

Transparency audit grades of 1,446 public authorities, 2024-25**Proactive Disclosure and the Information Commissions**

- **Origin:** The RTI Act, 2005 replaced the Freedom of Information Act, 2002; it came fully into force on 12 October 2005.
- **Section 4:** Public authorities must publish key information suo motu, so that citizens need to file fewer requests.
- **Information Commissions:** The CIC and SICs are statutory bodies created by the Act, not constitutional bodies.
- **2019 amendment:** Tenure, salaries and allowances of Information Commissioners are now as prescribed by the Central government.
- **Monitoring:** Under Section 25, Commissions report annually and can recommend steps to authorities that are not complying.
- **Not to confuse:** Proactive disclosure (Section 4) differs from information supplied on request (Sections 6–7), due within 30 days.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (transparency, accountability) and GS4 (probity) to argue that RTI works best when disclosure is the default rather than something citizens must ask for.

Mains value-add: Section 4(2) of the RTI Act says public authorities must constantly endeavour to disclose suo motu 'so that the public have minimum resort to the use of this Act' — cite it to argue for disclosure by default.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the Right to Information Act, 2005, consider the following statements:

1. Section 4 of the Act requires public authorities to publish certain categories of information on their own, without a request.
 2. The Central Information Commission is a constitutional body.
 3. After the 2019 amendment, the tenure and salaries of Information Commissioners are as prescribed by the Central government.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 only (c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Section 4(1)(b) mandates suo motu publication (Statement 1 true). The CIC is a statutory body created under Section 12 of the Act, not by the Constitution — the trap (Statement 2 false). The RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019 lets the Centre prescribe tenure and salaries (Statement 3 true).

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2020 (GS2): "Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission." Discuss. (150 words)

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** RTI: Right to Information | CIC: Central Information Commission | SICs: State Information Commissions | SC: Supreme Court

Make the Data Protection Board Functional in Eight Weeks: Kerala HC

Why in news: The Kerala High Court directed the Centre to make the Data Protection Board under the DPDP Act functional within eight weeks, while hearing a PIL on passenger data collected at airports.

Key Details:

- **The case:** A PIL said collection, storage and processing of sensitive passenger data at airports must comply with the DPDP Act, 2023 and the DPDP Rules, 2025.
- **Court's view:** The Division Bench said the petitioner's privacy concerns 'could not be ignored', as it found citizens' privacy was being compromised.
- **Digi Yatra:** Earlier, the court held that Digi Yatra could not insist on Aadhaar alone; a driving licence is now also accepted, and Voter ID may be considered.
- **Wider debate:** Norway plans temporary curbs on camera-equipped smart glasses in schools, hospitals and changing rooms over covert recording and facial recognition.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The Rules:** The DPDP Rules were notified on 14 November 2025, with an 18-month window for phased compliance.
- **Digital trail:** Every UPI payment, loan and subscription leaves a 'financial footprint' — data that the Act treats as personal data.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

- **Roots:** Follows *Puttaswamy* (2017), which made privacy a fundamental right, and the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2018).
- **Key terms:** The individual is the 'Data Principal'; the entity deciding why and how data is processed is the 'Data Fiduciary'.
- **Scope:** Covers digital personal data, and data collected offline that is later digitised.
- **The Board:** An adjudicatory body that inquires into breaches and imposes penalties; appeals go to the TDSAT.
- **Penalties:** Up to ₹250 crore for failing to take reasonable security safeguards against a data breach.
- **Not to confuse:** The Board adjudicates complaints; MeitY frames the Rules. The Aadhaar Act, 2016 has its own regulator, UIDAI.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (rights, governance) and GS3 (cyber security) to show that a data protection law is only as strong as the body that enforces it.

Mains value-add: In *Puttaswamy* (2017), the nine-judge Bench held that any curb on privacy must meet the tests of legality, legitimate aim and proportionality — cite it to test surveillance-heavy systems like facial recognition.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, consider the following statements:

1. Appeals against orders of the Data Protection Board lie with the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal.
2. The Act applies to personal data collected in non-digital form even if it is never digitised.
3. A penalty of up to ₹250 crore can be imposed for failure to take reasonable security safeguards to prevent a data breach.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: Appeals go to the TDSAT (Statement 1 true). The Act covers digital personal data and non-digital data only once it is digitised — the trap (Statement 2 false). The Schedule sets a maximum penalty of ₹250 crore for failing to take security safeguards (Statement 3 true).

Related PYQ: UPSC Prelims 2018: "Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement? (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution" — Answer: (c).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** HC: High Court | DPDP: Digital Personal Data Protection | PIL: Public Interest Litigation | TDSAT: Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal | UPI: Unified Payments Interface | MeitY: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology | UIDAI: Unique Identification Authority of India

Mizoram to Count Refugees Separately in Census 2027

Why in news: Mizoram has decided to enumerate refugees living temporarily in the State during the second phase of Census 2027, recording their details on a list separate from Indian citizens.

Story so far: The 29 Sept Brief covered the first phase of Census 2027. New today: how a border State will count people who are not Indian citizens.

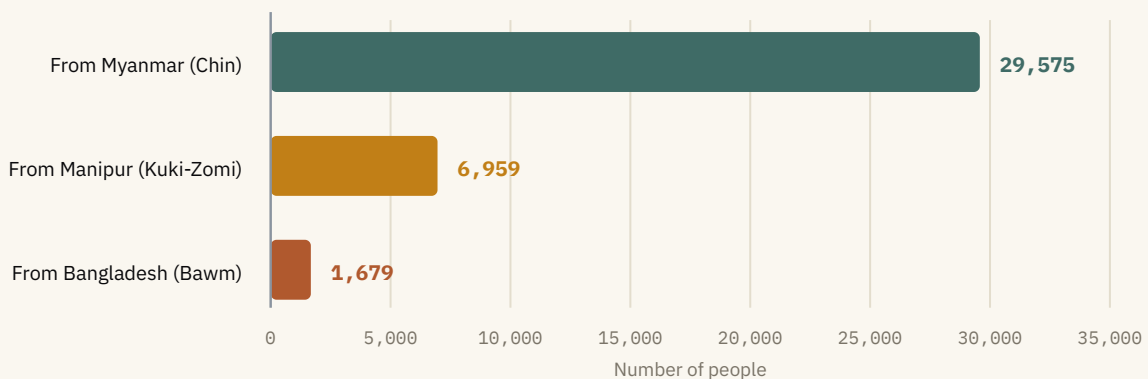
Key Details:

- **Numbers:** As of August 20, 38,213 refugees were registered: 29,575 from Myanmar, 6,959 from Manipur and 1,679 from Bangladesh; local groups put the figure above 60,000.
- **Who they are:** Myanmar's Chin people came after the February 2021 coup; Bawm people fled Bangladesh in November 2022; Kuki-Zomi people fled Manipur in May 2023.
- **Kinship:** The Chins, Bawms and Kuki-Zomis are ethnically related to Mizoram's dominant Mizo community — the main reason the State has sheltered them.
- **Safeguards:** Those unwilling to share Aadhaar will not be compelled; people dropped from the rolls in the SIR will still be counted.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Note:** People from Manipur are Indian citizens displaced within the country, though the State's tally groups them with refugees.
- **Border regime:** The Free Movement Regime let border residents travel 16 km across the 1,643-km India–Myanmar border; rules from December 2024 cut this to 10 km.

People sheltering in Mizoram, by origin (as of 20 Aug 2026)



India's Approach to Refugees

- **No treaty:** India is not a party to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol.
- **No dedicated law:** There is no national refugee law; foreigners are governed by the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025.
- **Case by case:** Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils have been hosted under government policy; others may register with the UNHCR in New Delhi.
- **Non-refoulement:** Courts have read the principle of not sending people back to persecution into Article 21, though not uniformly.
- **States' role:** Only the Centre decides who is a refugee; in 2021 the MHA told border States not to admit people from Myanmar.
- **Not to confuse:** Refugees cross an international border; internally displaced persons (such as those from Manipur) do not.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (refugee policy, Centre–State relations) and GS3 (border management) to show the gap between ethnic solidarity in border States and national security concerns.

Mains value-add: In *NHRC v. State of Arunachal Pradesh* (1996), the SC held that the State must protect the life and liberty of Chakma refugees under Article 21, as it applies to every person, not just citizens — cite it on refugees' rights.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. India is a party to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.
2. Mizoram shares international borders with both Myanmar and Bangladesh.
3. The Chin people of Myanmar are ethnically related to the Mizos.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 3 only (d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: India has signed neither the 1951 Convention nor its 1967 Protocol, despite hosting many refugees — the trap (Statement 1 false). Mizoram borders Myanmar to the east and south and Bangladesh to the west (Statement 2 true). The Chins share ethnic and linguistic ties with the Mizos (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SIR: Special Intensive Revision | UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs | NHRC: National Human Rights Commission | SC: Supreme Court

Katchatheevu: What the 1974 and 1976 Agreements Settled

Why in news: Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said India has acknowledged that Katchatheevu belongs to Sri Lanka, citing the Centre's statement in India's Supreme Court last week.

Story so far: The 2 Oct Brief covered Sri Lanka at two years of President Dissanayake's 'system change'. New today: the Katchatheevu question.

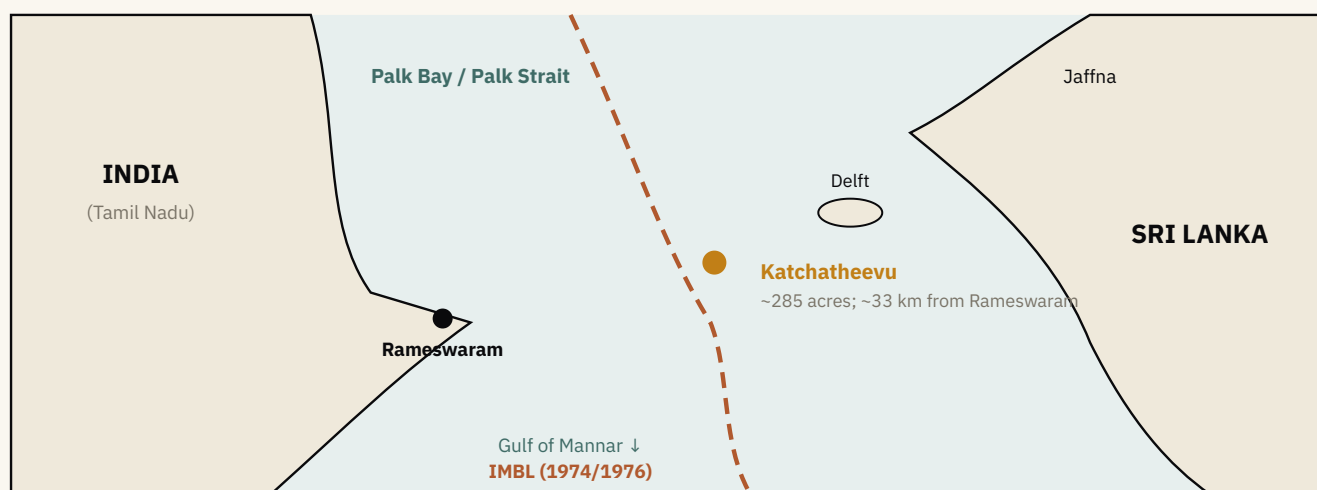
Key Details:

- **In court:** On October 6, Attorney General R. Venkataramani told the SC that India has 'excellent relations' with Sri Lanka and does not want to reopen the 1974 and 1976 agreements.
- **Petitions:** Pleas, including one filed in 2008 by former T.N. CM J. Jayalalithaa, call the cession 'unconstitutional'; the matter is listed for February 2027.
- **Fishermen:** The SC remarked that T.N. fishermen should be sensitised against crossing into Sri Lankan waters near the island.
- **Sri Lanka's line:** Mr. Dissanayake said Sri Lanka keeps good bilateral relations with India, as he marked two years in office.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **The island:** Uninhabited, about 285 acres, in the Palk Strait, roughly 33 km from Rameswaram; its only structure is St. Anthony's Church.
- **Livelihood stakes:** Sri Lanka frequently arrests Indian fishermen and seizes boats for fishing across the boundary line.

Katchatheevu and the India–Sri Lanka maritime boundary (Palk Strait)



Schematic diagram, not to scale; coastlines simplified. IMBL = International Maritime Boundary Line.

India–Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements

- **1974 agreement:** Drew the boundary in the Palk Strait and placed Katchatheevu on the Sri Lankan side; it allowed visits to the island by Indian pilgrims and fishermen.
- **1976 agreement:** Drew the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal; each side's vessels may not fish in the other's waters without permission.
- **Wadge Bank:** The 1976 arrangement recognised the rich Wadge Bank fishing ground, near Kanyakumari, as within India's sovereign rights.
- **History:** Before 1974, the island was claimed as part of the Ramnad zamindari; Sri Lanka also claimed it.
- **Not to confuse:** Berubari (1960) needed a constitutional amendment to cede territory; the Centre has maintained Katchatheevu was disputed, not Indian territory.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS2 (India and its neighbourhood) to discuss how livelihood disputes of fishermen can strain otherwise close relations, and the case for joint management of the Palk Bay fishery.

Mains value-add: In the *Berubari Union* reference (1960), the SC held that ceding Indian territory to a foreign country needs a constitutional amendment under Article 368, leading to the 9th Amendment — cite it on the legal limits of boundary settlements.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to Katchatheevu, consider the following statements:

1. The island lies in the Gulf of Mannar.
2. It was placed on Sri Lanka's side of the maritime boundary under a 1974 India–Sri Lanka agreement.
3. A 1976 agreement demarcated the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Katchatheevu lies in the Palk Strait, north of Rameswaram, not in the Gulf of Mannar — the location trap (Statement 1 false). The 1974 agreement placed it on the Sri Lankan side (Statement 2 true). The 1976 agreement extended the boundary to the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** SC: Supreme Court | T.N.: Tamil Nadu | CM: Chief Minister

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 2

SC on Delhi detentions: at a special Sunday hearing, a Bench of Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed the Centre and Delhi Police to stop illegal detentions, review barricades, keep Internet and Metro services running, and allow peaceful assembly outside the 4-km prohibitory zone — 'subject to law and public order'.

How to use: *GS2 (fundamental rights): example of courts balancing liberty and public order; pair with Himat Lal K. Shah and Anita Thakur (2016) on peaceful protest.*

Gandhi's 'Great Trial' (1922): tried for sedition under Section 124A IPC before Judge C.N. Broomfield in Ahmedabad for three *Young India* articles, Gandhi pleaded guilty and said 'affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law'; he was sentenced to six years.

How to use: *GS1/GS2: quote in answers on dissent, sedition law and civil disobedience.*

Emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Pakistan's President declared an emergency in the province under Articles 232(1) and 234 of Pakistan's Constitution, suspending its elected government and handing power to the governor.

How to use: *GS2 (comparative constitutions): compare with India's Article 356 and the safeguards set in S.R. Bommai (1994).*

BC quota pledge: Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu said his party would give up to 40% of seats to Backward Classes in local body polls, after the courts struck down a 34% BC reservation.

How to use: *GS2 (local government): cite with the 50% ceiling and the 'triple test' for local body reservation.*

Cash transfers and elections: former ECI Director General Akshay Rout notes the Economic Survey 2026 puts the burden of unconditional cash transfers on States at about ₹1.7 lakh crore.

How to use: *GS2/GS3 (electoral reforms, fiscal policy): use in answers on freebies and fiscal space.*

Indian killed in Riyadh: a Houthi strike on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport killed 12 people; India's embassy said one Indian died and at least 10 were injured. The Houthis also threaten shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

How to use: *GS2 (diaspora, West Asia): example of risks to the large Indian workforce in the Gulf.*

GS PAPER 3: SECURITY, ENVIRONMENT & S&T**Why the UAPA Needs Reform: Vague Offences and the Bail Bar**

Why in news: On the second death anniversary of Prof. G.N. Saibaba, who spent a decade in prison before his acquittal under the UAPA, legal scholars renewed calls to reform the law.

Story so far: The 11 Oct Brief covered the NIA's UAPA case over the attack on an Indian pilot; the 7 Oct Brief covered a Navy espionage case. New today: the debate over the law itself.

Key Details:

- **Saibaba's case:** Arrested in 2014 and convicted in 2017, the 90%-disabled professor was acquitted by the Bombay HC in 2024 and died soon after release.
- **Long pre-trial custody:** In the Bhima Koregaon case, 16 accused were jailed under the UAPA; charges are yet to be framed after eight years, and Father Stan Swamy died in custody.
- **Vague terms:** 'Membership' of an unlawful organisation is not defined; the SC in 2023 overruled its 2011 view that only 'active membership' is an offence.
- **Bail bar:** Section 43D(5) bars bail if the accusation appears 'prima facie true' on the police case — making release depend heavily on the judge.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Delhi riots case:** Five of seven appellants got bail in early 2026 after more than five years; two were denied as alleged 'intellectual architects'.

- **Unsettled law:** In May 2026 an SC Bench referred to a larger Bench how *K.A. Najeed* (2021) on prolonged custody applies despite Section 43D(5).

Key Supreme Court rulings on UAPA bail and membership

Case	What the Court held
<i>Arup Bhuyan</i> (2011)	Mere membership is not a crime; only 'active membership' involving violence
<i>Zahoor Ahmad Watali</i> (2019)	At the bail stage, courts must accept the prosecution's material broadly at face value
<i>K.A. Najeed</i> (2021)	Long custody with no early trial in sight can justify bail despite Section 43D(5)
<i>Arup Bhuyan</i> review (2023)	2011 view overruled; membership of a banned group is itself an offence

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967

- **Origin:** Enacted in 1967 to deal with unlawful activities threatening India's sovereignty and integrity.
- **Terror chapter:** After POTA was repealed in 2004, terrorism provisions were added to the UAPA, and tightened again in 2008 after 26/11.
- **2019 amendment:** Lets the Centre designate individuals, not just organisations, as terrorists.
- **Custody:** Investigation can extend to 180 days before a charge sheet, against 90 days under ordinary criminal law.
- **Probe:** Both State police and the NIA can investigate UAPA cases.
- **Not to confuse:** UAPA is a substantive law defining offences; the NIA Act, 2008 creates the agency that investigates them.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (internal security) and GS2 (rights) to discuss balancing national security against due process, and why speedy trials matter as much as tough laws.

Mains value-add: In *K.A. Najeed* (2021), the SC held that statutory curbs on bail 'do not oust the ability of constitutional courts' to grant bail for violation of Part III — cite it on Article 21 and long undertrial custody.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. With reference to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, consider the following statements:

1. Since its 2019 amendment, the Central government can designate an individual as a terrorist.
 2. It was enacted in response to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.
 3. Under Section 43D(5), bail is barred if the court finds reasonable grounds to believe the accusation is prima facie true.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: The 2019 amendment extended designation to individuals (Statement 1 true). The UAPA dates to 1967; it was the NIA Act, 2008 that followed 26/11, though the UAPA was amended then — the trap (Statement 2 false). Section 43D(5) contains the 'prima facie true' bail bar (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** UAPA: Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act | HC: High Court | SC: Supreme Court | POTA: Prevention of Terrorism Act | NIA: National Investigation Agency

Global Warming Is Turning Sex Reversal in Frogs Into an Extinction Risk

Why in news: A study of agile frogs in Hungary, published in *Science Advances*, finds that heat-driven sex reversal lowers breeding success and could push populations towards extinction years sooner.

Key Details:

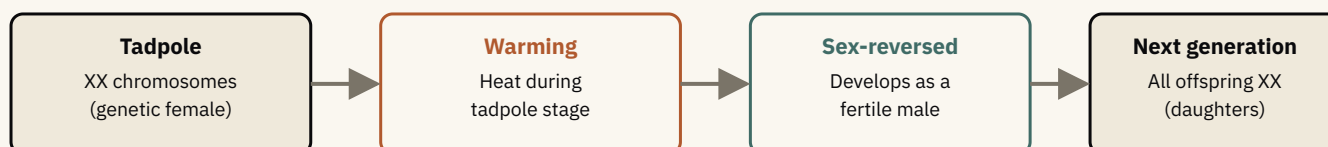
- **The mechanism:** As in mammals, agile frogs with two X chromosomes are genetic females; excess heat at the tadpole stage can make them develop into fertile males.

- **Fewer offspring:** Sex-reversed males made up about 20% of wild males but sired only about 4% of egg clutches; they also lost out in mating trials.
- **Weaker young:** 61% of their lab-reared offspring became sex-reversed, against 17% for normal males, and were more vulnerable to heat and ranavirus.
- **Population risk:** Models show small populations decline about 10 years earlier and go extinct about 9.5 years sooner when ranavirus is factored in.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Most threatened:** About 41% of amphibian species are threatened with extinction (Global Amphibian Assessment, 2023), the highest of any vertebrate class.
- **Expert view:** Researchers say scientists underestimate how many sex-reversed individuals live in wild populations.

How heat turns genetic females into males – and why it hurts the population



- ~20% of wild males were sex-reversed, but they sired only ~4% of egg clutches
- 61% of their lab-reared offspring also sex-reversed vs 17% for normal males' offspring
- With ranavirus, the model brings extinction ~9.5 years sooner

Agile frogs in Hungary; Science Advances (2026). Schematic diagram.

How Sex Is Determined in Animals

- **Genetic (XX/XY):** In mammals, females are XX and males XY; the male is heterogametic.
- **Genetic (ZW/ZZ):** In birds, the female is heterogametic (ZW) and the male is ZZ.
- **Temperature-dependent:** In many turtles and all crocodilians, nest temperature during incubation decides the hatchling's sex.
- **Climate link:** Warmer beaches are producing more female sea turtles, such as green turtles on the northern Great Barrier Reef.
- **Why amphibians are at risk:** Their thin, permeable skin and dependence on both water and land make them sensitive to heat, pollution and disease.
- **Not to confuse:** Sex reversal is a developmental change; sequential hermaphroditism (as in clownfish) is a normal life-cycle change.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (climate change, biodiversity) to show that warming harms species not only by heat stress but by distorting reproduction – a less visible route to extinction.

Mains value-add: Amphibians are often called 'indicator species': with permeable skin and a two-stage life cycle, their decline signals degradation of both water and land habitats – cite it on why amphibian loss matters.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. In many species of turtles and crocodiles, the sex of the hatchling depends on the incubation temperature of the egg.
2. In birds, the female has two different sex chromosomes (ZW).
3. Amphibians are the least threatened class of vertebrates on the IUCN Red List.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: Temperature-dependent sex determination is common in turtles and found in all crocodilians (Statement 1 true). Birds use the ZW system, in which the female is heterogametic (Statement 2 true). Amphibians are the most threatened vertebrate class, with about 41% of species at risk — the reversal trap (Statement 3 false).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

TRISHNA: Indo-French Thermal Imaging Satellite Set for Launch in 12–16 Months

Why in news: ISRO says TRISHNA, a joint thermal infrared satellite with France's CNES, will be launched within the next 12–16 months.

Key Details:

- **Purpose:** TRISHNA will measure land and sea surface temperature at high resolution to track water stress, crops, urban heat and coasts.
- **Partnership:** CNES provides the thermal infrared instrument; ISRO provides the satellite, launch and an optical (visible) imager.
- **Long gestation:** The project has been in the works for about a decade; an ISRO official said it is now at the 'realisation stage'.
- **Third joint mission:** It follows Megha-Tropiques and SARAL, earlier ISRO–CNES satellites carrying ARGOS and AltiKa instruments.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Specifications:** Per CNES, a sun-synchronous orbit at 761 km, 57–90 m resolution and a three-day revisit, over a five-year lifetime.
- **Why thermal:** Plants under water stress run warmer, so thermal images show crop stress before visible damage appears.

ISRO–CNES joint satellites

Satellite	Launch	What it does
Megha-Tropiques	2011	Studied the tropical water cycle and energy budget; brought down in a controlled re-entry in 2023
SARAL	2013	Ocean surface height with the AltiKa altimeter; ARGOS data collection
TRISHNA	Next 12–16 months	Thermal infrared imaging of land and ocean surface temperature

Remote Sensing Orbits and Thermal Imaging

- **Sun-synchronous orbit:** A near-polar orbit in which a satellite crosses each place at the same local time, giving consistent lighting.
- **Geostationary orbit:** About 35,786 km above the equator; the satellite matches Earth's rotation — used for weather and communication.
- **Thermal infrared:** Senses heat emitted by surfaces, so it can measure temperature even at night, unlike visible-light imaging.
- **Uses:** Irrigation scheduling, drought assessment, urban heat islands, volcano and fire detection.
- **Not to confuse:** Thermal sensors are passive (they record emitted heat); radar such as SAR is active (it sends its own signal).

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS3 (space technology, water and agriculture) to show how space cooperation delivers tools for climate adaptation and precision irrigation.

Mains value-add: The India–France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation (2018) committed both sides to joint Earth observation and maritime awareness missions — cite it to place TRISHNA in the wider strategic partnership.

TARGET PRELIMS MCQ

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. TRISHNA is a joint satellite mission of ISRO and the French space agency CNES.
2. TRISHNA is designed to operate from a geostationary orbit.
3. The Megha-Tropiques satellite was used to study the water cycle and energy budget of the tropics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: (d) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: TRISHNA is an ISRO–CNES mission (Statement 1 true). It will fly in a 761-km sun-synchronous orbit; high-resolution imaging needs a low orbit, not a geostationary one about 36,000 km up — the trap (Statement 2 false). Megha-Tropiques (2011) studied tropical rainfall, the water cycle and energy budget (Statement 3 true).

■ **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** TRISHNA: Thermal infraRed Imaging Satellite for High-resolution Natural resource Assessment | ISRO: Indian Space Research Organisation | CNES: Centre National d'Études Spatiales (French space agency) | SARAL: Satellite with ARGOS and ALtiKa | SAR: Synthetic Aperture Radar

QUICK FACTS & EXAMPLES — GS PAPER 3

Japan's FDI: Japan emerged as India's largest source of FDI in April–June 2026, with \$5.71 billion — more than the \$3.74 billion India received from it in all of 2025–26.

How to use: *GS3 (investment, India–Japan ties): cite on the growing role of Japanese capital in manufacturing and infrastructure.*

Starlink and security: the chairman of Parliament's Standing Committee on Communications and IT said India's security agencies had raised concerns about satellite Internet and India would not be pressured by social media campaigns over Starlink's entry.

How to use: *GS3 (internal security, telecom): example of security vetting of satellite communication services.*

Caged black panther: a black panther cub (a melanistic leopard) was caught in a cage in Pathanamthitta, Keralam, and shifted to the Thrissur Zoological Park; activists want it released in line with NTCA protocols.

How to use: *GS3 (human–wildlife conflict): example of the debate over capture versus rewilding; melanism is a genetic trait, not a separate species.*

Drought relief: a Central drought assessment team met Maharashtra's CM, who said the State would seek relief as per Central norms after deficient rain during crop growth.

How to use: *GS3 (disaster management): link to the Manual for Drought Management (2016) and the SDRF/NDRF funding route.*

GS PAPER 4: ETHICS**No 'Slow Learners': How a Teacher's Attitude Shapes a Student's Future**

Why in news: An educator argues that labelling students as 'slow learners' damages their potential, and that teachers should adapt their methods to how each student learns.

Key Details:

- **A damaging label:** A label like 'slow learner' can make teachers underestimate a student, lowering their expectations, effort and the student's confidence.
- **Late bloomers:** Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Winston Churchill and Walt Disney are often cited as people whose early school record did not predict success.
- **Wrong question:** Instead of 'Why is this student slow?', teachers can ask 'What is preventing this student from learning, and how can I change my approach?'

- **GS4 concept:** This illustrates how attitudes and prejudice shape behaviour, and why empathy and fairness matter in anyone who holds authority over others.

Data/Facts/Example:

- **Many ways to learn:** Students learn through visuals, discussion, demonstration, practical work, reading and repetition.
- **Shift in focus:** Recognising different strengths and removing barriers moves attention from labelling learners to improving the learning environment.

Attitude: Content, Structure and Function

- **Definition:** A learned tendency to evaluate a person, object or idea favourably or unfavourably.
- **Three parts:** The ABC model: Affective (feelings), Behavioural (actions) and Cognitive (beliefs).
- **Functions:** Daniel Katz named four: knowledge, utilitarian (adjustive), ego-defensive and value-expressive.
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** Expectations about a person can change how we treat them and so bring about the expected result.
- **Not to confuse:** Attitude is how one evaluates something; aptitude is a capacity to learn a skill.

How to use in UPSC Mains: Use in GS4 (attitude, social influence, empathy) to show how a public servant's assumptions about a citizen can shape outcomes — in classrooms, clinics or police stations.

Mains value-add: Rosenthal and Jacobson's 'Pygmalion in the Classroom' (1968) found that students whom teachers expected to bloom made larger gains — cite it as evidence that expectations shape performance.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. 'The labels we attach to people often become the limits they live within.' Examine how the attitudes of those in authority — teachers, doctors or civil servants — can shape outcomes for the people they serve. How can such biases be corrected? (150 words)

Related PYQ: UPSC Mains 2014 (GS4): "What factors affect the formation of a person's attitude towards social problems? In our society, contrasting attitudes are prevalent about many social problems. What contrasting attitudes do you notice about the caste system in our society? How do you explain the existence of these contrasting attitudes?" (10 marks)

- **[Abbreviations & Terminology]:** ABC: Affective, Behavioural, Cognitive